



CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE
BUREAU OF FORENSIC SERVICES
PHYSICAL EVIDENCE BULLETIN



COLLECTION BIOLOGICAL MATERIAL IN GASSING CASES

INTRODUCTION: *Gassing cases are defined in the California Penal Code under Section 4501.1 and 243.9. Gassing is also discussed in Section 1768.85 of the Welfare and Institutions Code. It defines “gassing” as the intentional placing, throwing, or causing to be placed or thrown, upon person of another, any human excrement or other body fluids or bodily substances or any mixture containing human excrement or other bodily fluids or bodily substances that results in **actual contact with the person’s skin or membranes**.*

SAMPLING: The following summarizes the important considerations in the collection and preservation of biological samples:

- A. Safeguards in handling biological evidence include:
 - 1. Treat all biological samples as if they are infective (e.g. cause hepatitis, tuberculosis or other diseases).
 - 2. Wear gloves.
 - 3. Keep any contaminated surface (e.g. gloved hand) away from your face to prevent skin contact.
 - 4. After collection of the evidence, properly dispose of gloves and wash hands with a germicidal soap.
- B. Goals of Biological Evidence Collection:
 - 1. Collect as much sample as possible from a single source.
 - 2. Keep biological evidence stains concentrated.
 - 3. Insure that the sample is not inadvertently mixed with other biological samples.
 - 4. Wear gloves. Change gloves if they become contaminated with any biological sample (to prevent cross contamination).
 - 5. Handle the sample in a manner that minimizes deterioration of the sample.
 - 6. Air-dry the sample as soon as possible.
 - 7. Package the evidence in paper bags or envelopes. Freeze the sample until delivery to the laboratory.
- C. Collection of solid or liquid material:
 - 1. Area(s) of the body should be documented prior to sampling of the biological material. This could be done by photography or using anatomical diagrams.

2. If blood, saliva, urine or feces is suspected on the skin, collect a sample on a swab. Wipe an uncontaminated area of skin with the same type of swab to serve as a “control/blank” sample.
3. If the suspected biological material has dried, slightly moisten a swab with distilled water and rub contaminated area to collect as much sample as possible. Collect a “control/blank” sample in the same manner from an uncontaminated area.
1. Samples should be dried, packaged in paper bags or envelopes and stored frozen until delivery to the laboratory.
2. “Q-tip” type swabs are convenient for sample collection. Individual Sterile swab packs (2 per sealed packet) such as Falcon Polyester Fiber-Tipped Applicator Swab catalog number 220690 are available from:

Becton Dickinson and Company
7 Loveton Circle
Sparks, Maryland 21152

PRESERVATION OF EVIDENCE:

After air-drying the samples, they should be tape-sealed in manila envelopes with case information and location of collected stain and preserved frozen.

Please contact your local/state Laboratory prior to submission of the evidence to discuss the needs of the case.